Message from David M. Kennedy, Director

As we near the end of 2006, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the past year. Staff and partners of the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) have made great strides in furthering coastal stewardship that will serve as the foundation for greater events in 2007 and beyond.

When I came on board this spring, OCRM incorporated the coordination office of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) into its organization. The CRCP brings together expertise from four of NOAA's line offices for a multidisciplinary approach to managing and understanding coral reef ecosystems. The Program has a long working history with the Coastal Zone Management, the National Estuarine Research Reserves, and the Marine Protected Areas programs and we look forward to working together even more closely with each of you.

Our 2006 major accomplishments include initiatives of national as well as regional scale. On May 3, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System expanded to include the Mission-Aransas Reserve in Texas. The Reserve adds 185,708 acres to the System and protects 1.3 million acres that benefit the public through local research, education, and outreach. We're pleased to welcome Mission-Aransas as the 27th Reserve in the System. In this past year, we also released the *Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas* that outlines guidance for cooperative efforts to increase protection of U.S. marine resources and develop the national system of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the United States. The draft framework will be available for public comment until February 14, 2007 and can be found online at www.mpa.gov. We welcome your feedback.

As we look ahead to the future of coastal management, we see great value in being retrospective and evaluating needs and opportunities for best managing the coast. In partnership with the Coastal States Organization and other stakeholders we recently kicked off the Coastal Management Visioning initiative. The initiative will continue throughout 2007 and will propose core principles and options for the reauthorization of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Throughout this process, we will engage the broader coastal community for input on priorities for the future of coastal management.

I would finally like to draw your attention to OCRM's new and revamped website that provides extensive and frequently updated information on our many programs and initiatives, including this year's evaluation findings of coastal programs and estuarine research reserves, as well as OCRM's performance measures. Also, please have a look at the attached 2006 Accomplishments Report to read more about our major achievements. dmk

2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

22 December 2006

OCRM Provides Financial Assistance to Support Ocean and Coastal Resource Management

During the past year, OCRM awarded nearly $149M in grants and cooperative agreements to support ocean and coastal resource management at the state and local level.

- More than $68M to 34 state and territory coastal management programs to support implementation of their coastal management and coastal nonpoint pollution control programs to preserve, protect, develop, and, where possible, restore and enhance the resources of the nation's coastal zone.
- More than $36M in grants to 31 recipients in 20 states through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) for projects involving the acquisition of land in fee or conservation easements.
- More than $21M to 27 National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRS) to operate and manage the reserves for long-term research, education, stewardship, construct facilities, and acquire land.
- Nearly $10M in Coral Reef Conservation Grants to support coral reef research, management, education, and conservation.
- $3.7M in Technology Development Projects through the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET).

Coastal Zone Management

State Coastal Zone Management Program Enhancements Completed

OCRM worked with state and territory coastal zone management programs to complete comprehensive five-year assessments of their coastal programs pursuant to Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). States assessed their coastal management activities within nine enhancement areas (wetlands, coastal hazards, public access, marine debris, cumulative and secondary impacts, special area management planning, ocean/Great Lakes resources, energy and government facility siting, and aquaculture) and developed five-year enhancement strategies for their highest priority issues. OCRM developed national fact sheets for each enhancement area summarizing overall findings, trends, management needs, and information gaps. The summaries also highlight state successes and planned strategies for the next five years.

Minnesota and New York Receive Full Approval of their Coastal Nonpoint Programs

This past year, OCRM, in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, fully approved Minnesota's and New York's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Programs. Minnesota and New York join 16 other states and territories that have fully approved Coastal Nonpoint Programs. The Programs implement a suite of management measures, backed by enforceable authority, to control runoff from six main sources: forestry, agriculture, urban areas, marinas, hydromodification (shoreline and stream channel modification), and wetlands and riparian areas.

OCRM Issues Revised CZMA Regulations

OCRM issued a Final Rule amending the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) regulations, 71 Fed. Reg. 787-831 on January 5, 2006. The Final Rule fulfills NOAA's response to the Vice President's 2001 Energy Report and the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The Final Rule removed ambiguity from the regulations, providing for more efficient approval of both energy and non-energy projects through a clearer, more transparent and predictable regulatory process, while maintaining state authority under the CZMA.

Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program

OCRM Selects CELCP Projects through Competitive Process

OCRM ran the first ever national competition to review and rank projects for funding under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). As directed by the FY 2006 Appropriations Report, NOAA transmitted a prioritized list of projects "ready and eligible for funding in FY 2007" to Congress. The list was reflected in the Senate Appropriations Committee's funding recommendation for FY 2007. Based on the Senate's report language, OCRM also solicited proposals to develop a competitively-ranked list of projects for FY 2008. The 2008 list is due to Congress by April 1, 2007.

National Estuarine Research Reserves

Near Real-time Weather Data Now Recorded at NERRS Monitoring Stations

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), working in conjunction with OCRM, has added telemetry to water quality and weather stations within the System-wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) at all 27 NERRS sites. The data are transferred in near real-time via satellite to the National Weather Services Hydrometeorological Automated Data System and are available to weather forecasters around the country. The capability was installed first at reserves in hurricane-prone areas in the Southeast and the Gulf of Mexico. The data will fill a gap in the weather forecasting toolbox, and will result in more accurate and timely forecasts, particularly in coastal areas. The initiative enhances the value of the SWMP to the growing Integrated Ocean Observing System.

OCRM and EPA Host 5th EstuaryLive

OCRM and the EPA held the 5th EstuaryLive event this year. Nearly 20,000 students and 489 teachers in 37 states and the island of Aruba participated in EstuaryLive, the annual interactive live "field trip" to some of NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserves and EPA's National Estuary Program sites around the country. Two reserves, South Slough in Oregon and Padilla Bay in Washington State, and two National Estuarine Programs (NEPs) were featured this year. The featured NEPs were the New York-New Jersey Harbor and the Peconic Estuary Programs. EstuaryLive is a free, interactive field trip over the internet that seeks to teach K-12 students about estuarine ecosystems' biology and wildlife.

Cooperative Institute for Coastal & Estuarine Environmental Technology

Coastal Managers Put CICEET Tools to Work

The Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET), a partnership between OCRM and the University of New Hampshire, funds the development of tools for planners and managers to address a wide range of coastal issues. In 2006, a number of these tools reached the field and were put into use. For example, managers in Bar Harbor, Maine, used a GIS spatial modeling tool to determine the most viable sites for eelgrass restoration, and developed an eelgrass buffer for a planned mussel farm. In California, the Army Corps of Engineers is monitoring the effects of a beach

renourishment project on seafloor elevations near San Francisco using a highly accurate integrated remote sensing and multi-beam sonar modeling system developed with support from CICEET.

Marine Protected Areas Center

OCRM Launches Pilot Project to Enhance Marine Protected Area (MPA) Planning and Management

The OCRM MPA Center launched a pilot project with the states of California, Oregon, and Washington, together with federal agencies and tribes, to pilot some of the key ecosystem-based methods for designing and managing a regional system of MPAs on the West Coast. In June, government partners, including federal agencies, states and tribes, met to share their understanding of place-based management in the region and begin identifying activities to enhance MPA planning and management. The OCRM MPA Center is working in partnership with the NOAA Ocean Service's National Marine Sanctuaries Program and the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science to conduct an ecological characterization for the region, and additional analyses of human uses, ocean governance, and cultural resources are also underway.

OCRM Completes First Analysis of Place-Based Management in U.S. Waters

The OCRM MPA Center has completed the first analysis of marine place-based management in the U.S. *The State of the Nation's Marine Managed Areas: The Emerging Picture of Place-Based Conservation in U.S. Waters* provides highlights from the analysis of the marine managed areas inventory, a partnership effort among federal agencies and coastal states to provide a comprehensive picture of place-based management for conservation purposes in U.S. waters. Among the key findings in the paper are that more than 90% of the nation's 1,500 marine managed areas allow some level of fishing and other uses; most are established and managed by state agencies but federal agencies manage the largest areas; and most are permanent and provide year-round protection. More detailed national and regional analyses will be published in 2007.

Coral Reef Conservation Program

NOAA Leads International Response to Record-Breaking Coral Bleaching Event

In the late summer of 2005, NOAA's Coral Reef Watch Satellite Bleaching Alert system sounded the first warning of a record-breaking coral bleaching event in the wider Caribbean, which resulted in 90% of corals bleached and 40% coral death at many sites. Throughout 2006, NOAA scientists took the lead in documenting the event, collecting and mapping over 1,500 bleaching and mortality observations from more than 100 scientists in 22 jurisdictions. To respond to future events, the bleaching alert system will be expanded from 24 to 96 sites worldwide. Furthermore, NOAA, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, and 50 expert partners developed *A Reef Manager's Guide to Coral Bleaching*, which identifies science-based strategies and adaptive management actions to help reduce the impacts of coral bleaching and promote ecosystem resilience to help corals recover from severe bleaching events.

Mapping of U.S. Shallow Coral Reef Ecosystems Nears Completion

As of 2006, scientists in NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program have mapped over 9,000 km2 of shallow-depth U.S. coral reef areas, completing benthic habitat maps for five of seven jurisdictions including American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), and Puerto Rico. These efforts respond to the National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs that calls for the mapping and characterization of all U.S. shallow-water coral reefs by 2009. The Northwest Hawaiian Islands maps are complete, and the main Hawaiian Islands nearly so. Scientists are currently assessing satellite imagery to prepare for mapping in Florida which will complete this mapping effort.